CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 8 – The Church Loses Territory (AD 632-732)

1. The Curtain Opens on a Scene of Disaster
    a. *50 years after the destruction of the Empire in the West, the East had to fight off the German tribes who tried to cross its borders*
    b. *Another 50 years and Heraclius had to wage war with the Persians finally ending with the battle of Nineveh in AD 627 through the annihilation of the Persian Army*
    c. *The German tribes are from the North of Aryan or Indo-European race, mostly also Christians; the Arabs came from the South, were Semitic by race and Muslim in religion*
2. Mohammed (Mohammad)
    a. *Inhabitants of Arabia (Levant) were descendants of Ishmael, generally heathen, worshiping idols and believing in many gods*
    b. *Mohammed, born in Mecca in AD 570; was a shepherd boy then a merchant traveling to countries where he met Jews and Christians and learned something of their religion*
    c. *On Ramadan, he claimed to receive revelations from angel Gabriel (Jibril) forming the religion of Islam; his teachings later collected and written in a book - the Koran (Qur'an), the sacred book of the followers to this day, fundamentally teaching: "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Allah is the Arabic for God.*
3. Many Imperial Provinces Are Conquered
    a. *Mohammed died in 632, but in the next one hundred years his followers, conquered all of Arabia, Persia, penetrated into India, overran Asia Minor, twice laid siege to Constantinople, and took away the provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa.*
    b. *Conquered Spain in 711-718 conquered Spain, and later penetrated Gaul*
    c. *The moment was one of the great crises in the history of the Church and the world*
4. The Battle of Tours
    a. *King Clovis of the Franks in Gaul converted to Christianity in 496*
    b. *In 732 – Charles, a high officer of the Franks called all Frankish tribes to defend Christianity garnering support and met the Muslims on the plain of Tours on a 7-day battle*
    c. *The Frankish army was unwavering and the Arab army retreated because of heavy losses*
    d. *Charles was later known as Charles Martel or "Hammer"*
5. The Losses to Islam
    a. *Wreckage of many churches in many lands (either conquered or invaded)*
    b. *Deprivation of possible mission fields among many heathen nations*
    c. *Islamization of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, which had been the seat of numerous and flourishing Christian churches; and Spain*
    d. *Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Hippo in North Africa, Seville (descendants of the Arabs in North Africa and Spain became known as Moors); the last Moorish stronghold in Spain was Granada ending in 1492*
6. The Causes for Defeat
    a. *Civilization had softened the Christian inhabitants of the Empire, while wild desert life had hardened the Muslim Arabs*
    b. *Monasticism had robbed the Empire of thousands who might have been its defenders.*
    c. *Islam promised to men who fell in battle while fighting for the faith special privileges and pleasures in the next world which inspired the fierce Arab horsemen who fought with reckless courage and without fear of death*
    d. *Most important, the salt of the Christianity of that day in the eastern part of the Empire had largely lost its savor. (Matthew 5:1 3.); had become formalized in its religion and failed to evangelize those areas into which Islam now carried its faith; internal controversy weakened the Church, while Christians expended their energies persecuting other Christians rather than fighting the common enemy*